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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2181  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 7964  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 3994  
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 2519  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 3215  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2017  
TAGS: PGOV PK PREL PINR KFLO CASC AMGT AEMR  
SUBJECT: MGPK01: SITREP 13, AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD: BHUTTO  
UNDER HOUSE ARREST

REF: ISLAMABAD 4797

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Benazir Bhutto is under virtual house arrest. Ambassador called Bhutto to urge her to consider the consequences of pushing for demonstrations and to express our concerns regarding further political polarization and her own personal safety. The police have arrested hundreds of PPP supporters and blocked roads to Rawalpindi in an effort to block the rally. The GOP restored distribution of international TV news channels late on November 8 but again blocked their transmission on November 9. Pakistan's religious party coalition has called for a November 14 National Consultative Meeting of all opposition parties, including the PPP. Seventeen people have been charged with sedition in Karachi, charged with making anti-government statements. There was limited violence in some cities last night. Mission operations continue normally. End summary.

¶2. (C) Several hundred capital police have surrounded People's Party (PPP) leader Benazir Bhutto's Islamabad home. National Security Advisor Tariq Aziz clarified in a November 9 phone call to the Ambassador that the police had been ordered not to execute an arrest order until she tried to leave the house.

¶3. (U) Up to 1,000 PPP supporters have been arrested across the country, and police blocked roads to Rawalpindi in an attempt to block the PPP's planned demonstration, scheduled for 1300 local time. According to RSO sources, approximately 5000 police are controlling access in and around Rawalpindi. There are also now police checkpoints around Islamabad International Airport; only ticketed passengers are being allowed to proceed to the airport. Roads between the Northwest Frontier Province and Rawalpindi are also blocked

¶4. (C) The Ambassador called Bhutto November 8 and November 9 to urge her to consider the consequences of pushing for demonstrations and to express our concerns regarding further political polarization and her own personal safety. Bhutto replied that Musharraf's promise to resign as Chief of Army Staff (COAS) is still too vague and that parliamentary elections should be held in January. She said the roundup of party supporters, including one instance of a family and their guests being jailed, left her little choice but to

proceed with the rally.

¶15. (C) The religious parties block, Muttahida Majlis-e-Alam (MMA), met November 8 night and decided to call a November 14 National Consultative Meeting of all opposition parties, including PPP. The MMA is demanding that Musharraf lift the state of emergency, restore judges, announce parliamentary elections, and doff his uniform. They also threatened a country-wide protest November 16.

¶17. (C) Police and Rangers broke up a November 8 demonstration at Karachi City Courts by approximately 100 lawyers; they were protesting the filing of sedition charges against 17 lawyers, politicians and businessmen. The Sindh High Court Bar Association and the Balochistan Bar Association, separately, decided November 8 to continue their boycotts of the courts.

¶18. (C) CG Lahore scheduled to meet November 9 afternoon Asma Jahangir, leader of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

¶19. (U) Limited violence was reported during the November 8 Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) demonstration in Peshawar; JI will hold a demonstration today in Malakand.

¶10. (U) The government lifted distribution blocks on international cable TV news networks late on November 8 but reinstated them the morning of November 9.

PATTERSON